

The Connecticut Libertarian

May 2001

The Official Newsletter of the Libertarian Party of Connecticut

www.lpct.org

HB5810 Fails

by James Madison

HARTFORD – Despite the best efforts of members of the Libertarian Party of Connecticut and members of other third parties, the legislative proposal that would have given minor parties ballot access equal to that of the Democrats and Republicans has failed.

The bill, HB5810, was given a public hearing before the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) committee, but GAE chairman Alex Knopp, decided not to bring it up for a vote “in the absence of significant support for it.”

If passed, the ballot access change would have allowed minor parties full ballot access provided they had any statewide candidate get more than 1% of the vote in either of the last two elections.

The failure of the bill is not all bad news – we can use it as a strong, real-world example of how the R’s and D’s use their institutional power to keep alternative parties out. We researched the change to be made, drafted the wording, found a sponsor, and promoted it publicly – and then they let it die without even a vote. If ever there was a chance for them to prove they are willing to be fair, this was it; and they failed.

The LPCT or another third party may submit the bill again in a future legislative session. It is not uncommon for bills to be proposed for several years before being passed. With the experience gained from this attempt, it will be much easier to move it through the system next time.

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A Man’s Home is His Castle

by Darlene Nicholas

...Except in New London, CT where the Institute for Justice is fighting to prevent the City Council and its private strongarm the New London Development Corporation (NLDC) from stealing people’s homes and businesses.

On April 4th, the Institute for Justice, a libertarian law firm based in Washington D.C., organized a free showing at the Garde Arts Theater of an Australian



Opponents of eminent domain pack the house for a showing of “The Castle”

movie, entitled *The Castle*. The movie highlights the struggles of a family and their neighbors to keep their homes when their government tries to buy them out to expand an airport. In the movie, after hitting several roadblocks, the families are successful at keeping their homes. Approximately 400 people attended and enthusiastically cheered them on.

Before the movie, Chip Mellor and Scott Bullock of the Institute for Justice addressed the crowd concerning what’s been happening in their own backyards and invited those who wanted to stay afterwards for refreshments and a Q&A session. About 30 to 40 people stayed to ask how something like this could happen. Ned Vare, Arline Dunlop, Andrew Lennon, and I attended to represent the LPCT.

The event was just the latest in a string of protests that have intensified during the last few months and have involved the Institute for Justice, the LPCT, and a number of other local and state organizations. The controversy began in 1998 when pharmaceutical giant Pfizer built a research facility next door to a neighborhood called Fort Trumbull.

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The city and the NLDC decided that they could make better use of the Fort Trumbull properties than the home and business owners could. The government and the NLDC condemned the properties and were preparing to demolish them using the power of eminent domain.

Eminent domain has been used in the past to make way for public works, such as roads or schools. The development plan in this case calls for a privately owned hotel, a health club, office space, and other unspecified developments. These developments are designed to enhance the newly built Pfizer facility.

The Institute for Justice filed a lawsuit against this instance of eminent domain abuse in December 2000. Despite the lawsuit, the NLDC obtained permits to demolish buildings before they had to answer for their actions in February. They felt that because they had the power of eminent domain, they were the true owners of the property. It is outrageous that the City of New London would unconstitutionally give this power to a private corporation.

The NLDC refused to halt the demolitions in blatant disregard for the law and the constitution. A temporary restraining order was filed on January 31st.

While Scott Bullock attempted to get an injunction, the Coalition to Save Fort Trumbull, a local group of supporters, held a vigil around the homes slated for demolition. Institute for Justice Vice President for Communications John Kraemer spent the night in one of the properties to ensure that the demolition crew didn't come in the middle of

the night before Scott could get the injunction. The lawsuit is scheduled to be heard May 21st.

Eminent domain is being abused all over the country, according to the Institute, which represents individuals who feel their rights are being stomped on by their government.

According to an editorial produced by the Ayn Rand Institute's MediaLink department (full text available at <http://www.aynrand.org/medialink/op-eds/eminent.txt>), "use of eminent domain flatly contradicts the fundamental principles of this country, which declare that all men are created equal, that every man is an end in himself endowed with inalienable rights, including property rights, that each man be accorded equal protection by the law and that no man be deprived of due process under the law." Eminent domain sacrifices the rights of some individuals in favor of the alleged public interest of others.

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Doing Something? Write about it!

The Connecticut Libertarian welcomes submissions from members. Articles of 300 to 500 words with photographs are ideal. Send submissions or inquiries to TCL@lpct.org.

Meeting Notice: The SCC will meet at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 15, at the Wethersfield Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway (Route 99) in Wethersfield. All members welcome. Agenda:

- Minutes of last meeting
- Treasurer's Report
- Chairman's Report
- Current Business
 - 2001 Candidates
 - 2001 Goals
- New Business
 - Review of "strategy session" idea
 - Details of 2001 Convention (date, speakers, etc.)

Directions: From North: I-91 South to Exit 28 (See Rt 5 & 15 South). From South: I-91 North to Exit 28 (See Rt 5 & 15 South). From East, I-84 West to Exit 57 (See Rt 5 & 15 South). From West, I-84 East to I-91 South, to Exit 28 (See Rt 5 & 15 South). *Route 5 & 15 South:* Take Exit 85 (Route 99/Silas Deane Hgwy) South. At the 4th traffic light, turn right onto Church St. Turn into first driveway on left.